

REMARKS

Claims 1 and 3-16 are pending. Claims 1, 8 and 11-13 are amended.

Claim Amendments

Claims 1, 8 and 11-13 have been amended to improve clarity and readability. Claims 1, 12 and 13 have been amended to include the features of canceled claims 3, 7 and 9. Claim 11 has been amended to recite the features of claims 3 and 7. No new matter has been added.

Applicant further submits that the amendments do not present any previously unclaimed features in the claims, and therefore requests that the amendments be entered and considered without the requirement of a Request for Continued Examination.

Claim Rejections - 35 U.S.C. §112

Applicant respectfully requests reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejection of claim 11 as being indefinite under 35 U.S.C §112, second paragraph, for reciting a coupling in the preamble and positively reciting a pipe in the body of the claim. Claim 11 has been amended to functionally recite the pipe (i.e., “spring catches on opposite sides for engaging between corrugations on an outside of said pipe when the pipe is pushed within the coupling”) as the Examiner suggested would be acceptable.

Claim Rejections - 35 U.S.C. §102

Applicant respectfully requests reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejection of claims 1-8, 10 and 12-16 under 35 U.S.C. §102(c) as being anticipated by Schwarz et al. (US 6,349,980).

Claim 1 has been amended to include the features of claims 3, 7 and 9. Thus, claim 1 recites a rigid housing having a deformable layer on its inner and outer surfaces, wherein the deformable layer forms a tapering surface on the inner surface and wherein the deformable layer includes a part formed on the outer surface on an external ledge of said housing to provide a seal

with a cooperating member. Claims 11-13 recite similar features. The combination of these features leads to a coupling having extremely effective sealing characteristics. Schwarz et al. do not teach or suggest all of these features.

Schwarz et al. disclose a coupling and discusses in detail a sealing ring (7) on the outside of the coupling. Schwarz et al. do not disclose a retainer that retains the pipe when the pipe is pushed into the housing. Instead, as discussed on column 3, lines 35 to 41, the pipe is retained by *a separate locking element* that has to be introduced radially through a recess in the housing and then locked in position. Furthermore, as can clearly be seen from Figure 1 of Schwarz et al., a tapering sealing surface is not shown, as now required by claim 1. There is no suggestion of such a surface in the document. The only layer of deformable material present on the outer surface of the coupling of Schwarz et al. is the ring (7). This ring is not continuous with the layer on the inner surface, as required by claim 1. The presence of a continuous layer in the claimed coupling/assembly provides an unbroken sealing surface which reduces the chance of leakage and is also easy to manufacture. Thus, the coupling as presently claimed in claims 1, 11, 12 and 13 has a substantial number of distinct differences which by themselves, and particularly in combination, result in a effective coupling that is distinguished from the disclosure of Schwarz et al.

Applicant respectfully requests reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejection of claims 1-4, 7-10, 12 and 13 under 35 U.S.C. §102(e) as being anticipated by Corbett et al. (US 5,799,986).

Corbett et al. disclose a high-pressure connector formed of an inner and outer member. The structure of the coupling is discussed in column 14, line 46 to column 15, line 28 of Corbett et al. The Examiner appears to have equated the inner and outer member of Corbett et al. to the layer of rigid plastics and the layer of deformable material recited in claims 1, 12 and 13. The inner member of Corbett et al. is formed of a resin having a conductive material embedded therein. Furthermore, Corbett et al. state that the resin hardens around the molding mandrel. It is therefore clear that the inner member of Corbett et al. is not formed of a deformable material and thus cannot deform against a pipe as required in the amended claims. Still further, as is clear

from the Figures in Corbett et al., a tapering sealing surface of deformable material is also not shown or suggested. The sealing in the Corbett et al. coupling is provided by an O-ring, and thus the sealing layer is not continuous over inner and outer surfaces, nor is it formed on a ledge to seal with a cooperating member, as required by claims 1, 12 and 13. Thus, Corbett et al. disclosure does not teach or suggest many of the features of the independent claims. For at least the above reasons, claims 1-4, 7-10, 12 and 13 are allowable over Corbett et al.

Conclusion

In view of the above amendment, applicant believes the pending application is in condition for allowance.

Applicant believes no fee is due with this response. However, if a fee is due, please charge our Deposit Account No. 22-0185, under Order No. 22197-00009-US from which the undersigned is authorized to draw.

Dated: July 25, 2006

Respectfully submitted,

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